

## Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria in Geneva, Switzerland *January 16, 1994*

*Q.* President Clinton, are you going to talk about terrorist issues at this meeting today?

*President Clinton.* We'll have a statement later when we finish. We just met. We haven't started the meeting yet.

*Q.* Are you happy to be here, and can you tell us what you expect from the meeting, sir?

*President Asad.* I'm delighted to be meeting with President Clinton and his assistants. We are at the table not to think about expectations but to do the work.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:15 a.m. at the Intercontinental Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

## The President's News Conference With President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria in Geneva *January 16, 1994*

*President Asad.* At the conclusion of the important and constructive talks which were conducted today between President Clinton and myself, I wish to express my deep satisfaction for what these talks have effected in terms of the United States determination to do all it can in order to bring the peace process to its desired objective, the objective of establishing the just and comprehensive peace in the region through the implementation of the U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, as well as the principle of land for peace. In this respect, I appreciate the fact that, notwithstanding the great importance that President Clinton attaches to the internal affairs of his country, he has attached a special importance as a full partner and honest intermediary to helping the parties reach a comprehensive peace that is in the interest not only of the peoples of the region but also the peoples of the world at large.

Today's meeting between President Clinton and myself came to crown a number of exchanges and telephone communications between us over the last year. I hope that our meeting today will contribute to the realization of the aspirations of the peoples in the region, mainly that this new year will be the year of achieving the just and comprehensive peace which puts an end to the tragedies of violence and wars endured by them for several decades.

During our meeting, I had the opportunity to stress to President Clinton Syria's firm com-

mitment to the principles and bases of the peace process and our strong conviction that peace cannot be genuine and lasting unless it was comprehensive and based on the principles of international legitimacy and justice. This means endeavoring to reach a just solution on all tracks.

Historical evidence, both past and present, have proved that separate peace and partial solutions were not conducive to the establishment of real peace in the region. In this regard, I would like to express my satisfaction that President Clinton himself is committed to the objective of comprehensive peace.

On this basis, we have agreed to work together for the successive efforts aimed at putting an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict and at reaching a genuine and comprehensive peace that enables the peoples of the region to focus on the development, progress, and prosperity.

This meeting has also provided us with the opportunity to exchange views over a number of issues including those related to bilateral relations between our countries. We have agreed that the noble objective toward which we are working requires a qualitative move in these relations. We have also discussed questions related to the regional situation, as well as all matters that might constructively contribute to the achievements of security and stability in the Middle East.

Syria seeks a just and comprehensive peace with Israel as a strategic choice that secures